Caregivers socialize children to behave according to the norms and customs of their society and according to their personal values and beliefs and their interpretation of their role as caregivers. Landy (2002) outlines some general principles concerning care giving. She indicates that there are some experiences necessary for a child to develop optimally. Children will do best if they have a caregiver who provides a stimulating environment and provisions for their physical and nutritional needs, while also embodying the roles of a teacher, a playmate, a nurturer, and a limit setter, varying their behavior according to the situation and conditions at the time. Caregivers might be more competent in some of the roles than others. In addition, the same caregiver does not need to provide all the experiences. However, if children do not receive all of these types of experiences it might limit their development in a particular area.

Care giving practices are specific behaviors of caregivers which are determined by their goals. For example, if a caregiver has a socialization goal of academic success for a child, the caregiver would demonstrate this through setting a specific time for the child to do homework, inquiring about school activities, and going to functions at the school. Care giving varies from parent to parent and tends to evolve differently during different periods of history. However, despite these differences, the primary goal of caregivers is to assist children in attaining their optimal development.

Parental Responsiveness and Demandingness
Based on Baumrind’s (1991) work, Darling (1999) identifies two important elements of care giving – parental responsiveness and parental demandingness.

- **Parental responsiveness** refers to warmth or supportiveness. Supportive environments are ones in which caregivers are appropriate, consistent and predictable in their response to the child, and show affection through verbal and physical behaviors. Baumrind (1991, p. 62) defines responsiveness as “the extent to which a parent intentionally fosters individuality, self-regulation, and self assertion by being” aware and supportive of the needs and requirements of the child.

- **Parental demandingness** refers to behavioral control or requirements a parent has for a child to become a part of the family. A caregiver expresses his demandingness by having requirements for the child’s behavior, supervising the child, and disciplining the child. The last of these requires the parent to be willing to confront a child who disobeys. There is a strong relationship between a parent’s responsiveness and how competent the child is in his social interactions. Similarly, there is a relationship between a parent’s demandingness and the academic progress and problem behavior of the child (Darling, 1999).

The constellation of care giving behaviors described above is referred to as **parenting styles** and parenting behaviors. Darling discusses four parenting styles identified by Baumrind (1991). They are described in the following chart.
## Parenting Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Parking Lot Example</th>
<th>Other Info</th>
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</table>
| **Indulgent**                                                               | Parent: “Take my hand.”  
Child: Runs ahead                              | Can be classified as:  
(1) Democratic parents who are lenient, while still being conscientious or  
(2) Nondirective parents who are lenient and not conscientious. |
| o Permissive or nondirective  
 o Very responsive, but not demanding  
 o Inconsistent in response to child's behavior and often fail to provide guidelines or set limits or boundaries | Parent: “Take my hand.”  
Child: Runs ahead                              | Can be classified as:  
(1) Democratic parents who are lenient, while still being conscientious or  
(2) Nondirective parents who are lenient and not conscientious. |
| **Authoritarian**                                                           | Parent: “Hold my hand.”  
Child: “Why do I need to do that?”  
Parent: “Because I said so” or “Children need to hold their parent's hand in parking lots.” rather than providing reasons or rational explanations for the request.  
Parent: “How many times do I have to tell you to hold my hand in parking lots?” | Two sub-categories:  
Non-authoritarian-directive parents are directive without being autocratic.  
In contrast, Authoritarian-directive parents are “highly intrusive.” |
| o Highly demanding and directive  
 o Not responsive  
 o Demand obedience without giving reasons  
 o Status oriented; use status and threats to elicit behavior  
 o Develop structured home environments  
 o Expect child to respond immediately to a request or direction so appear impatient or hostile in interactions with child  
 o Demonstrate verbal hostility, corporal punishment, non-reasoning, punitive strategies, and directiveness | Parent: “Hold my hand.”  
Child: “Why do I need to do that?”  
Parent: “Because I said so” or “Children need to hold their parent's hand in parking lots.” rather than providing reasons or rational explanations for the request.  
Parent: “How many times do I have to tell you to hold my hand in parking lots?” | Two sub-categories:  
Non-authoritarian-directive parents are directive without being autocratic.  
In contrast, Authoritarian-directive parents are “highly intrusive.” |
| **Authoritative**                                                           | Parent: “It's important to hold hands in the parking lot because children are short and drivers may not see a child walking behind the car and run over them.”  
Parent: “It's time to eat now so put your toys away and it will be easy to find them the next time.”  
Parent: “I really like it when you answer me when we are in different rooms and I call your name.”  
Parent: “If you hold my hand you can have a cookie when we get to the car.” | CHILD REACTIONS:  
 o Child wants to please parents  
 o More likely to follow directions  
 o Moore receptive to values and goals of parent  
 o Control techniques used by parents tend to elicit more compliance from the child |
| o Demanding as well as responsive  
 o Have clear standards of conduct for children and supervise them without being intrusive  
 o Use supportive disciplinary methods but are not punitive  
 o Give children explanations for requests  
 o Use praise to encourage children to behave in certain ways  
 o Engage children in conversations through the use of open-ended rather than yes or no responses  
 o Elicit positive reaction in child  
 o Display warmth and involvement, reasoning, democratic participation, and being god natured and easy going | Parent: “It's important to hold hands in the parking lot because children are short and drivers may not see a child walking behind the car and run over them.”  
Parent: “It's time to eat now so put your toys away and it will be easy to find them the next time.”  
Parent: “I really like it when you answer me when we are in different rooms and I call your name.” | CHILD REACTIONS:  
 o Child wants to please parents  
 o More likely to follow directions  
 o Moore receptive to values and goals of parent  
 o Control techniques used by parents tend to elicit more compliance from the child |
| **Uninvolved**                                                              | Child: runs to car without parent seeming to notice or expressing any concern about the child's safety |                                                                                  |
| o Neither responsive nor demanding  
 o Have no expectations concerning their behaviors  
 o Often ignore their children  
 o Lack follow-through | Child: runs to car without parent seeming to notice or expressing any concern about the child's safety |                                                                                  |
Impacts of Parenting Styles on Different Ethnic Groups

The research reported about authoritative parenting focuses on Caucasian children, not African American or Asian children. The effect of parenting style on minority children can be quite different. While authoritarian parenting predicts poorer academic achievement in White and Asian children and Hispanic females, the results are not the same for African Americans or Hispanic males. In fact, Asian children whose parents use authoritarian parenting perform better in school. Parenting by minorities may appear to be authoritarian when it is merely an alternative style (Mason, Walker-Barnes, Tu, Simons, & Martinez-Arrue, 2004).

The same type of parenting might have different meanings and different results among minority and Caucasian families. The same behavior by a parent might lead Caucasian children to feel loved and African-American children to feel rejected or unloved. An example of this difference in reaction is provided by Mason and associates (2004) in the area of “control through guilt.” A mother might tell a child that if he loved her, he would not do things that make her worry. African American and Caucasian youth considered this type of “control through guilt” to be coercive and manipulative. African American youth, however, thought this behavior indicated they were loved and cared for; while neither White nor Hispanic youth did (Mason, et al., 2004).

Authoritative Homes

It appears that authoritative parents have the most positive impact on their children. Aspects of authoritative parenting which influence children's development are monitoring and disciplining (Landy, 2002). When discipline includes consistently applied rules and caregivers recognize the child’s point of view, children tend to develop in a more positive manner. According to Darling (1999),

- Children and adolescents from authoritative homes are more socially competent and have more problem-solving skills than those from non-authoritative homes.
- These children are better at interacting with other children and adults and are better at solving problems.
- Children raised in authoritative homes also tend to display more helping behavior, maturity, better interpersonal skills, and higher academic success.

There is a relationship between authoritative child rearing and children’s problem-solving and interpersonal skills as well as decreasing levels of problem behaviors. Baumrind (1971) found children raised in authoritative homes tend to have positive self-esteem and display pro-social behavior, as well as self-control. These children are able to balance the demands from their caregivers concerning their behavior and achievement while still maintaining their independence. There is evidence that the children of parents with responsiveness and moderate control demonstrate “optimal development” (Landy, 2002, p.34).
Psychological Control in Authoritative and Authoritarian Homes

Parenting styles differ on demandingness and responsiveness. In addition, these styles differ on psychological control. Psychological control involves activities such as shaming the child, making him/her feel guilty, or withdrawing love. This concept of psychological control clarifies the differences between authoritative and authoritarian parents. Both types of parents have high expectations for their children in terms of behavior and conforming to rules – they are both high in behavioral control. Authoritarian parents, however, expect their children to follow orders without question; while authoritative parents are open to discussion with their children about their expectations and are willing to explain their reasons for them. In other words, authoritarian parents are high in psychological control and authoritative parents are low in this characteristic.

Authoritarian and Indulgent Homes

When children are raised by authoritarian parents they are likely to do moderately well in school and not demonstrate problem behavior. However, their social skills are poor and they have low self esteem and are more likely to be depressed (Darling, 1999). In contrast children raised in indulgent homes tend to perform poorly in school and be involved in problem behavior. However, these children are less likely to be depressed and tend to have better social skills and higher self esteem.

References


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